

Civics in International Education: A National Imperium
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Position Statement:

In the words of Horace Mann, “schoolhouses are the republican line of fortification.” One of the greatest responsibilities that we have as Idaho educators is to help develop a responsible citizenry, a citizenry that is actively engaged in bringing to life the founding principles of our great nation.

The role of educating young Americans includes more than developing actively engaged and informed citizens at the local and national level. According to Margaret Branson, Associate Director, Center for Civic Education, one component of civic education involves the development of competent and responsible citizens whose perspective, knowledge, and skills will enable them to participate more effectively in local, state, national, and international affairs.

Fundamental to the development of responsible citizens in Idaho is the need for global awareness and the broadening of perspectives. Economically speaking, it is imperative for Idaho’s leaders to promote global awareness, recognizing that:

- Idaho companies export approximately one-third of the products they produce.
- Since 1998, exports from Idaho to the world have grown 29%.
- In 2001, more than 25,000 Idaho jobs, roughly 5% of all Idaho jobs, were due to exports.

Civic education is one of the major components in developing a responsible and informed citizenry. Civic education must continue to move beyond the classroom to include our communities, nation, and world. The text of the goals statement adopted by the National Governors Association in March 1990 declared:

If the United States is to maintain a strong and responsible democracy and a prosperous and a growing economy into the next century, it must be prepared to address and respond to major challenges at home and in the world. A well-educated population is the key to our future. Americans must be prepared to: Participate knowledgeably in our democracy and our democratic institutions; Function effectively in increasingly diverse communities and states and in a rapidly shrinking world. Today a new standard of an educated citizenry is required, one suitable for the next century. All students must understand and accept the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship.

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige has stated, “If we expect students to navigate international waters, we need to give them an international education that meets the highest standards.” As we work to ensure that we leave no child behind, we must also strive to develop responsible, informed, and engaged *global* citizens.